

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 28, 2003 LR 11

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next issue this morning, LR 11 offered by Senator Janssen and others. It's a resolution that would propose an amendment to Article III, section 24 of the Nebraska Constitution. The resolution was introduced on January 13 of this year, at that time referred to the General Affairs Committee. The resolution was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments pending, Mr. President. (AM0298, Legislative Journal page 621.)

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The Chair would recognize Senator Janssen to open on his LR 11CA.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. Members of the Legislature, LR 11CA is a straightforward proposal. If approved by the people, it would allow the Legislature to authorize and regulate games like that found in a casino. The way the gaming is defined in the green copy is changed by the committee amendment with an amendment that clarifies the intent. They both, essentially, allow the Legislature to authorize games of chance played with cards, dice, machines like slot machines, equipment like roulette, essentially, games that would be played in casinos. These are the same types of games that were allowed in Senator Schimek's bill, as well. Now as many of you know, we've talked about this before, I've worked hard for several years with Senator Schimek and others to bring the issue of expanded gaming to the ballot in the state of Nebraska. This has been a topic of discussion as long as I've been in the Legislature, and we've talked about that yesterday and the day before. During that same time, we've discussed, studied and even argued over the issue of expanded gaming. We've watched casinos being built on our borders and Nebraskans chose to spend their entertainment dollars at those facilities. I believe that the people's frustration has boiled over recently in the state and has resulted in a successful petition effort that is awaiting a legal decision by our courts. This petition, to me, and I believe to all of you, was a wake-up call in this state. And it was a sign that if the Legislature, I say the Legislature does not take the leadership role in this issue, then the people of the state will do it, and we just might not like what we get.